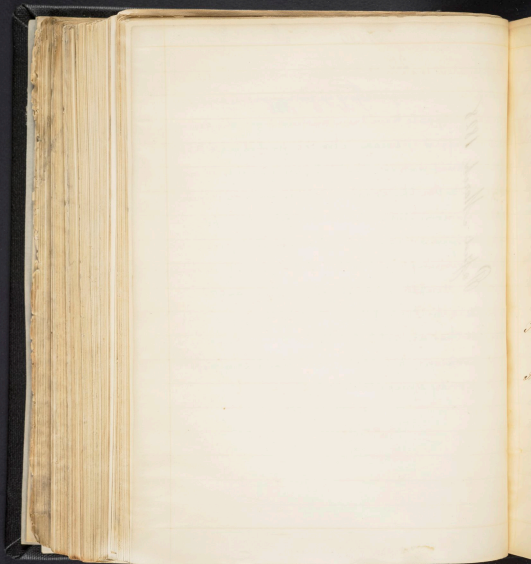


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Page 1. March 1828



Inaugural Essay

Cholera Morbus

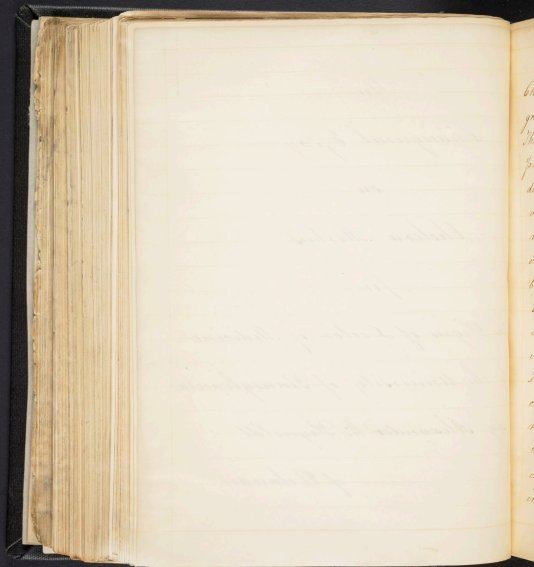
for

The Degree of Doctor of Medicine

In the University of Pennsylvania

by Alexander W. Reynolds

of Delaware.

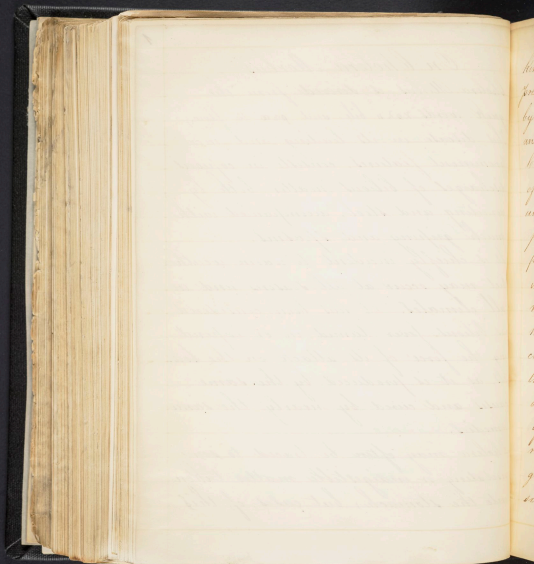


On Cholera Morbus

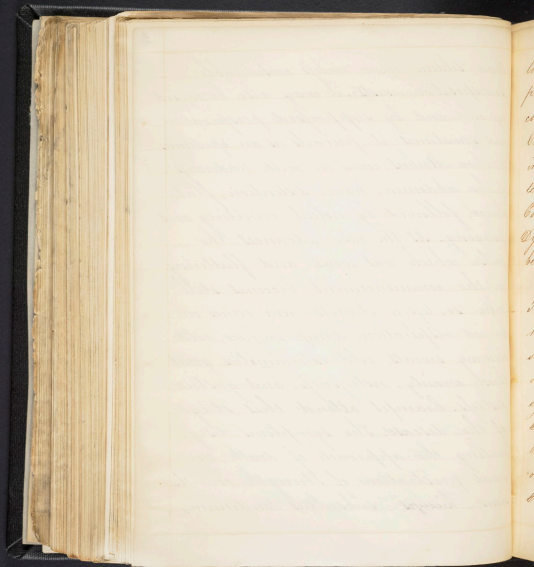
Cholera Morbus is derived from the
greek words *χολη* bile and *πρω* to flow.
This disease in its leading and more
prominent features, consists in copious
discharges of bilious matter, both by
vomiting and stool, accompanied with
much griping and spasms.

It is chiefly incident to warm weather,
but may occur at all seasons and in
all climates. It has been considered,
as bilious fever turned in, or expend-
ing the force of its attack on the bow-
els, as it is produced by the same
causes and cured by nearly the same
remedies.

Cholera may often be traced to some
irritating or indigestible matter taken
into the stomach; but cases, of this



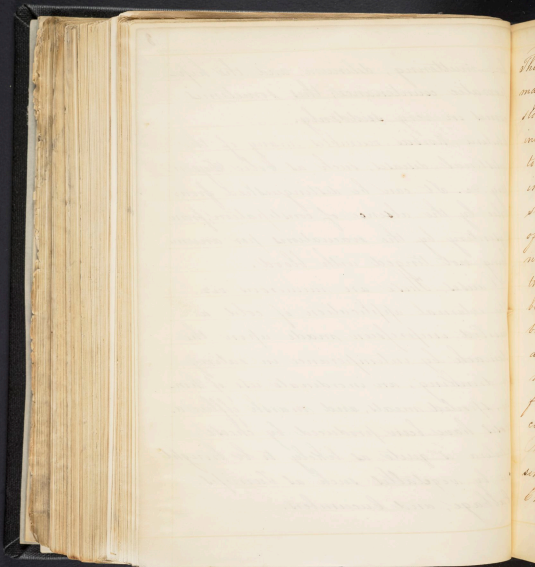
kind seldom occur unless considerable predisposition exists; it may also be caused by cold and by suppressed perspiration, and sometimes it prevails as an epidemic. Cholera Morbus comes on with tenderness of the abdomen, pain, distention, flatulence, followed by violent vomiting and purging. As the case advances the pulse which was weak and fluttering in the commencement becomes still more so, less of strength now comes on, hurried respiration, damp surface, cold clammy sweats, cold extremities, great thirst, anxiety, restlessness, and gastric distress. Cramps attend this stage of the disease. The symptoms designating the approach of death, are great prostration of strength, convulsions, hiccups, subsultus tendinum,



low muttering, delirium, and the hypopcoratic countenance; this sometimes comes on very suddenly.

Cholera Morbus resembles many of the intestinal diseases; such as Colic, Dysentery, &c. It can be distinguished from Colic, by the absence of constipation, from Dysentery by the evacuations per anum being not tinged with blood.

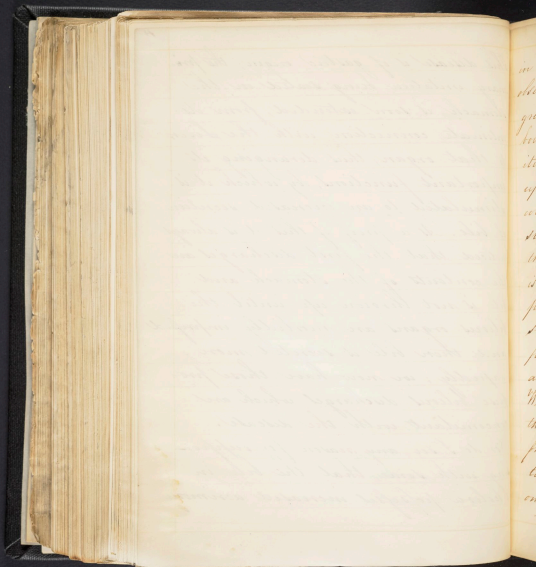
Causes. These are numerous viz. The external application of cold, a merbid impression made upon the stomach by intemperance in eating or drinking, an inordinate use of honey, spoiled meats, and marsh effluvia. Cases have been produced by cheese. Cholera is quite as likely to be brought on by vegetables such as Turnips, Cabbage, and Cucumbers.



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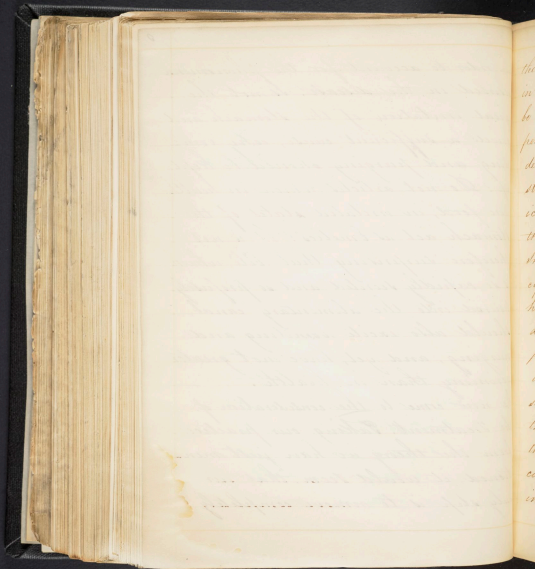
This disease is of gastric origin; the primary irritation being seated in the stomach, is soon extended, from its intimate connection, with the Liver to that organ; thus deranging its important functions, by which it is stimulated to an increased secretion of bile. As a proof of this it is always noticed that the first discharges are the contents of the stomach and bile is not thrown up until the bilious organs are morbidly impeded and then bile is secreted more rapidly; we now have those profuse bilious discharges which are concomitant with the disease.

Nor do I see any reason for supposing, with some, that the bile in Cholera possesses increased acrimony



in order to account for the phenomena
observed in the disease. Is not the
great irritation of the stomach and
bowels a sufficient cause, why vom-
iting and purging should be kept
up? Do not articles which in health
were food, in irritated states of the
stomach act as Emetics? It is not
therefore surprising, that bile, which
is so rapidly secreted and so profusely
poured into the alimentary canal,
should also excite vomiting and
purging, and yet, have not greater
acrimony than in health.

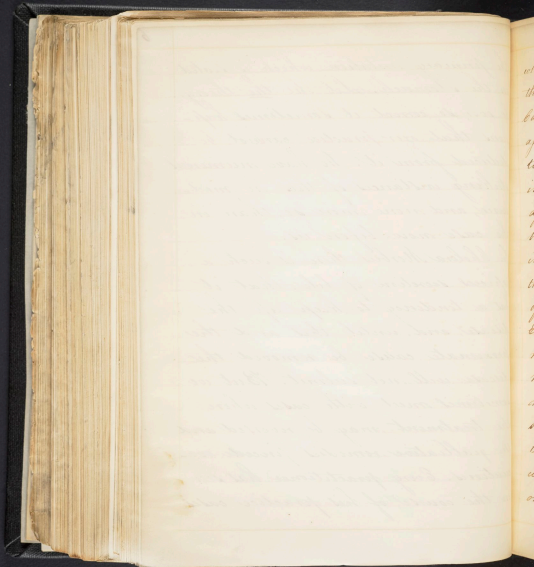
We now come to the consideration of
the treatment. Taking our practice
from the theory we have just men-
tioned, it would seem, that our
only step is to remove completely



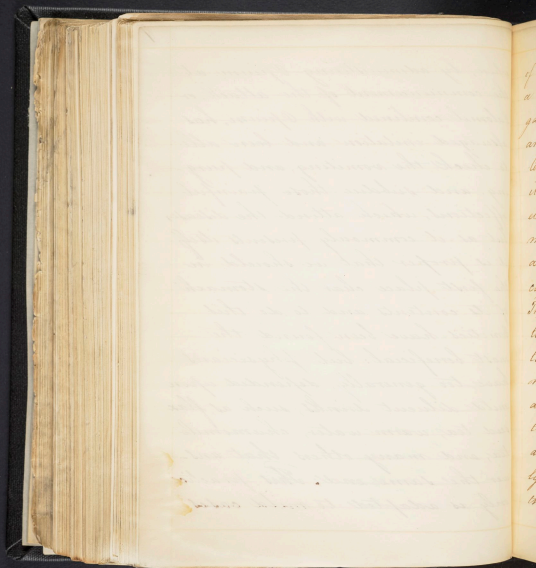
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the primary irritation which is seated in the stomach. Let the the theory be ever so correct it sometimes happens that our practice cannot be deduced from it. We have numerous striking instances of this in medicine, and none more so, than in the case now before us.

In Cholera Morbus there is such a copious secretion of bile, that it has a tendency to keep up the disease, and, until this and the proximate cause be removed the disease will not submit. But we sometimes meet with cases where the treatment may be reversed and the palliative remedies precede evacuations. Every practitioner has seen in the course of his practice cases

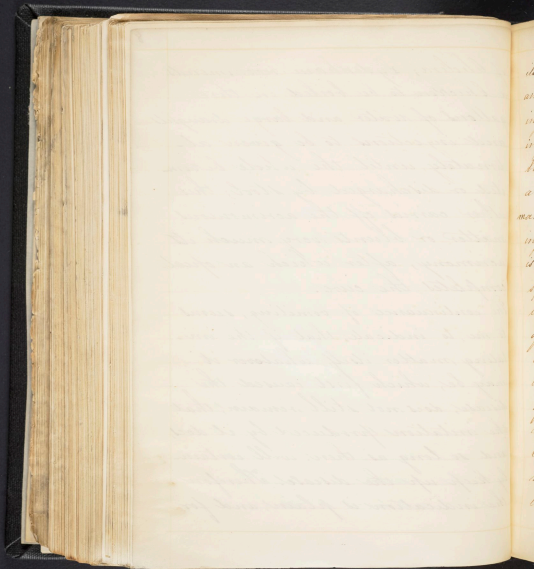


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where, by administering Opium at the commencement of the attack, or Calomel combined with Opium, has assuaged irritation and been able to check the vomiting, and purging, and subdue those painful affections, which attend the disease, but as it commonly presents itself it is proper that we should in the first place clear the stomach of its contents and to do this Emetics have been found the most beneficial: but physicians have, too generally, depended upon mild diluent drinks, such as, flax seed tea, warm water, chamomile tea, and many others that answer the same end; This practice only is adapted to mild cases.



of Cholera, Sydenham recommends a Chicken to be boiled in three gallons of water and large draughts and injections to be given alternately, until the whole be vomited or discharged by stool; this either carries off the acrimonious matter or blunts very much its acrimony, after which an opiate completes the cure.

The continuance of vomiting, seems to me, to indicate, that if the irritating matter itself, whatever it may be, which first caused the disease, does not still remain, that the irritation produced by it does, and so long as there, will certainly keep up the disease. Therefore the indication is plain, and for



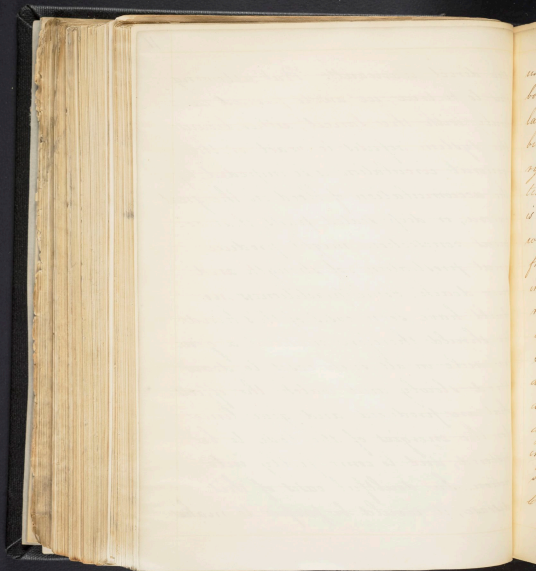
its removal, I should direct Spessac-
 anka, which not only acts by clear-
 ing out the stomach of any offend-
 ing matter; but interrupts the mor-
 bid train of action, by producing
 a different impression on the sto-
 mach, relaxing the surface, and resolv-
 ing spasm. The second indication
 is to calm irritation, and remove the
 spasmodic pains; and to do this
 we may employ several remedies:
 of all the remedies we can employ,
 when spasms are violent, venese-
 ction is now considered the most
 efficient; as in all other cases this
 remedy must be regulated by
 the condition of the system; it
 must not be forgotten that in
 this disease, we are not to be



altogether governed by the pulse, for let the feebleness of it be what it will if there is only ordinary rigour in the patient the lancet may be employed with safety. For says Professor Chapman I have often used the lancet when the pulse was exceedingly low, and have experienced a striking benefit. As you evacuate you will find the pulse rise, we may therefore lay it down as a pretty general rule, that in the early stage of any disease attended with much pain, if we find the pulse weak, we are to consider it as an indication of the oppressed condition of the system, which, will be most effectually overcome by

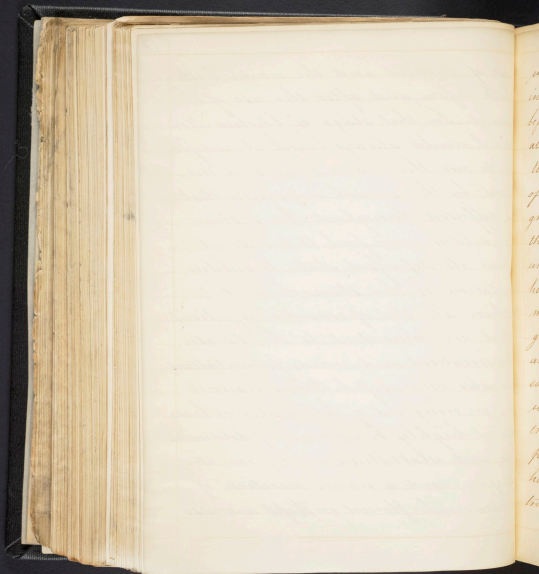


the direct evacuant. But allowing this to be true, we are to proceed cautiously with the lancet, either, because the system refuses to react, or the general circulation is so impeded, by the accumulation of blood in the great viscera, or deep seated parts, that copious venesection might produce great prostration of strength and even death. Some practitioners no doubt have seen cases of this kind. We should therefore make it a general rule in all such cases to draw blood slowly and watch the effects that are produced, and give time for the energies of the body to be restored, and to come fully into action. In doubtful cases of this disease, it would be proper to make



use of frictions and the warm bath both before and after the use of the lancet. In this stage of Cholera Morbus I would always think it necessary, to use the warm bath and frictions; by the general impression that is diffused throughout the system, we seldom ever fail to arouse it from its depressed state, to subdue irritation of the stomach, and to relieve all the spasmodic affections that are coincident to the disease.

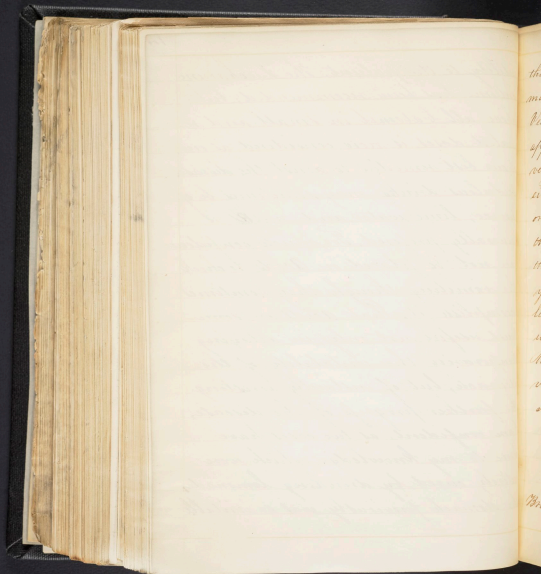
Embrocations and warm fomentations are also very useful. Warm flannel dry or ring out of hot water or brandy is highly beneficial, by determining and establishing action on the surface; and a warm decoction of Chamomile flowers or Hops are also



useful. Much has been said of Opium in Cholera Morbus; it may be given before or after the evacuations from the alimentary canal, but at whatever time we may use it, the best method of administering it, on account of the great irritability of the stomach, I think is in the form of an enema, which may be repeated every four or five hours; we often meet with patients much opposed to this manner of giving it; we must then administer an old Opium pill; this is much easier retained than a fresh one; it is given to answer the same end, that is to allay irritation and relieve pain. A bag of bladders rung out of hot brandy, applied over the epigastric region, is, sometimes, of permanent



utility to the patient. The Saccharum
 Salurni has been recommended; but
 above all Calomel in small and re-
 peated doses, is now considered as one
 of our best remedies to arrest the disease.
 Acidulous drinks may sometimes be of
 service; lime water and milk is
 generally preferred. Too much confidence
 can not be placed on Acids to check
 the vomiting though they sometimes
 accomplish it. That acids are some-
 times useful, not only, in allaying
 temporarily the irritability of the
 stomach, but of instantly arresting
 the further progress of the disease;
 I am confident, as two cases have
 come to my knowledge, which were
 entirely cured by drinking lemonade,
 the stomach previously was so irritable



that even water could not be, for a moment, retained, after it had been drunk.

Vesicatories come next to our notice; applied to the epigastrium they are very useful, these may be made either by means of a common blister, or spirits of Turpentine rubbed over the surface or by nitric acid; when the patient complains of much pain you must apply an Alkali to relieve it, and then dress the part with some stimulating ointment.

M^r Hops prescription is recommended very highly in such cases.

It is	Nitric acid	— — — —	ʒi
	Camphorated emulsion	— — — —	ʒviii
	Laudanum	— — — —	gtts XL
			Dose ʒi.

Brandy toddy has been recommended.

[Faint, illegible handwriting on lined paper, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]

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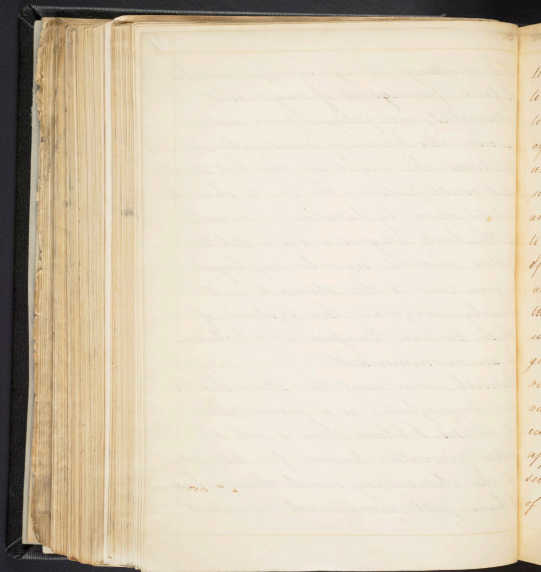
The Tourniquet applied to one or more of the extremities. To keep the patient at rest and subdue the vomiting, tying him down fast to the bed has been recommended, and then administer Laudanum.

The greater number of cases of Cholera Morbus can be cured by the remedies I have mentioned, when properly employed; but still cases are met with that baffle the efforts of the most skilled practitioner; such cases prevail when the most malignant epidemics are raging, and prove fatal in a very short time; common cases sometimes terminate in twenty four hours. This disease being very liable to relapses, all exciting causes must be avoided, such as excess in eating

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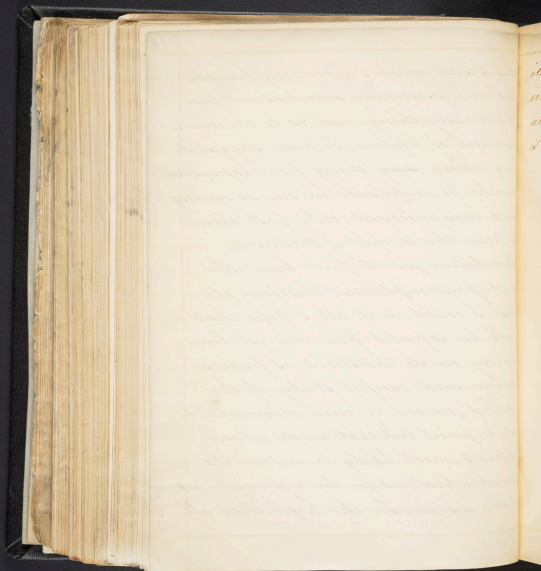
179
and drinking, using improper articles
of food, paroxysms of rage, cold
extremities, and fatigue from violent
exercise, also beware of miasmatic ex-
halations, the night air, the hot sun,
and constipation; the bowels should
be kept open by laxative medicines;
as Rhubarb, Magnesia, Castor Oil &c.
Bitters should now be employed
to give tone to the stomach, and
thence revitalize the system; of
these Gentian, Quassia, and Colum-
bo are recommended.

Flannel worn next the skin should
not be neglected as a preventive
of diseases. I believe there is not a
better preventive known for diseases
of the alimentary canal than what
I have just mentioned. Throughout



this Essay, which I have now brought to a conclusion; my aim has not been to offer any thing new, as to the management of Cholera. To have suggested any thing ~~any~~ thing from experience would be impossible in one so young and inexperienced, only just about to enter the temple of medicine.

Speculation would have been idle and presumptuous; therefore, all that I could, and all, I hope that will be expected from me, yet lingering on its threshold, is from a review and careful study of the various means of cure recommended, to point out that course, which appears most likely to answer the several indications for the management of the disease. In the hope that all



its defects will be viewed with an
indulgent eye, and, its merits, if
any, duly appreciated; this Essay
is most respectfully submitted.

